



Innovative Strategies to Support Mental Wellbeing

By: Victoria Y. McCue, MSN, PhD(c), RN, CPN

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has adversely affected many people's mental wellbeing. COVID-19 has led healthcare organizations to reconceptualize and reform healthcare through an innovative lens that will foster resilience. Finding strategies to support mental wellbeing, especially for frontline clinicians, is crucial to ensure a comprehensive recovery. This manuscript describes innovative strategies implemented within one healthcare organization in the Southeastern United States to nurture mental wellbeing for the community and frontline healthcare clinicians.

Keywords: Mental wellbeing, COVID-19, Coronavirus, relaxation space, frontline clinicians

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has infected our world, leaving fear and devastation along its path. Healthcare organizations continue to learn valuable lessons dealing with the onset, duration, and, most recently, safe recovery measures post COVID-19. The road to recovery requires healthcare organizations to reconceptualize and reform healthcare through an innovative lens that will foster resilience. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is anticipated to exacerbate existing mental health disorders and contribute to the onset of new stress-related disorders for countless individuals (Horesh & Brown, 2020). Recovery from this pandemic must include plans for addressing mental health issues for both the community and healthcare professionals (Usher, Durkin, & Bhullar, 2020).

FOSTERING RESILIENCE

Baptist Health South Florida (BHSF) is recognized as a top healthcare organization in South Florida with a steadfast commitment to providing high-quality, cost-effective, compassionate healthcare services. The same passionate commitment to the community is as equally unwavering to the approximately 23,000 employees that make up the Baptist family. Understanding the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic early on, BHSF acted with tremendous

speed to mitigate stressors and implemented numerous initiatives focusing on the wellbeing of employees and the community they serve.

Virtual exercise, meditation, and educational seminars via a Zoom platform were quickly offered and encouraged to employees and the community. Through the Baptist Health Care on Demand App, virtual visits 24/7 were promptly offered at no cost. System-wide, BHSF implemented Employee Resiliency Support Groups to help all employees cope and foster ongoing resilience. However, the wrath of COVID-19 brings additional emotional strain and fear to the frontline healthcare clinicians. The high prevalence, infectious nature, and the associated morbidity and mortality of COVID-19 have exposed the frontline to new stresses unparalleled to past experiences (Maben & Bridges, 2020). Finding strategies to support mental wellbeing, especially for frontline clinicians, is crucial to ensure a comprehensive recovery. As BHSF assertively implemented and championed system-wide initiatives, one hospital embraced an innovative strategy to provide its frontline clinicians a private moment of serenity, away from the chaos of COVID-19.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGY

As COVID-19 cases started to increase, Simone Cheong, Magnet Project Manager at

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Figure 1

Relaxation Space signage



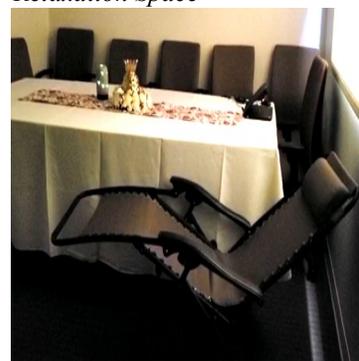
Figure 2

Office converted to Relaxation Space



Figure 3

Conference room converted to Relaxation Space



West Kendall Baptist Hospital (WKBH), immediately realized that frontline healthcare clinicians needed a quiet space to unwind and rejuvenate. As a nurse with many years of clinical experience, Simone understood that relaxation or quiet rooms for frontline clinicians was beneficial. The literature validates rooms such as these that allow employees to have a calm place to recharge, relax, and renew can significantly decrease burnout and improve employee morale (Burkholder, 2020; Dapcic & Figueroa, 2019; Wayment, Huffman, & Eiler, 2019; White, 2016). However, with a paucity of space in the hospital, a call for innovative action was needed.

In mid-March, when meetings were canceled, and some offices were left vacant, Simone took advantage and converted two conference rooms

and one office to create Relaxation Spaces for frontline clinicians (Figures 1-3). In need of a comfortable place to rest, Simone graciously donated the lounge chairs. The goal was to create a space intended to offer a stress-free environment by providing forms of self-care such as aroma and music therapy. With the lights dimmed, the Relaxation Spaces are seamlessly stocked with infused water and mints (Figure 4). Each room was set up to accommodate one person at a time, allowing a space to safely remove their mask and truly relax. Cleaning guidelines when entering and exiting the Relaxation Spaces following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations were established to ensure a safe and clean environment.

Figure 4

Relaxation Spaces stocked with refreshments



DISCUSSION

Healthcare organizations have been faced with incredible challenges due to COVID-19. Some of those challenges include understanding the stressors related to COVID-19 and safeguarding a healthy community and work culture. COVID-19 required hospitals to move swiftly with innovative strategies to navigate through these challenges and find ways to nurture resilience.

CONCLUSION

The Relaxation Spaces are one example of how hospitals can quickly and proficiently create a quiet space for frontline clinicians that builds resilience and promotes mental wellbeing. The

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response from frontline clinicians has been overwhelmingly positive, with many calling it a much needed tranquil space. Jobic Butao, patient care nurse supervisor, who has been working in an COVID-19 intensive care unit, stated that, “the joy I feel caring for patients is why I became a nurse, but sometimes we forget to take care of ourselves. The Relaxation Space helped me to center myself and allowed me to have a quiet moment to reenergize.” The gratitude from the frontline clinicians further affirms the need to foster ways to support wellbeing for all, especially our frontline healthcare heroes!

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The author reports no conflicts of interest. The author alone is responsible for the content and writing of the paper.

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